



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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CHAFEE COMMITTEE PROMOTES GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

Committee Approves Lobbying Reform Legislation Cosponsored by Chafee

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) today joined members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs (HSGAC) in approving S.2128, the Lobbying Transparency and Accountability Act of 2006. If signed into law, the bill would make significant strides to increase transparency and accountability in government, and, specifically, the lobbying of legislators. Cosponsored by Chafee, the bill is based on legislation drafted by Senator John McCain (R-AZ) late last year.

“I am very pleased that a compromise could be reached by my colleagues on the committee to provide for much greater transparency and accountability in government. The relationship between members of government and outside interest groups must be open, and I am glad we have reexamined the rules governing lobbying activities and addressed questions of improper influence,” Senator Chafee said. “I am hoping the swift passage of this legislation will strengthen public confidence in the legislative process,” he continued.

If passed, the legislation will enhance public awareness of the workings of government. Provisions requiring lobbyists to file quarterly reports on their spending activities, and placing those reports in an online database will give the public unprecedented access to the lobbying process, and the ways in which money is spent. In addition, the legislation calls for all registered lobbyists to disclose their financial contributions to candidates, political parties, and political action committees. Further, lobbyists would be required to disclose all expenses related to the travel of legislative or executive branch employees, in addition to any gifts exceeding a value of \$20, including meals and entertainment. Lobbyists would also be required to disclose all donations to any private charity which

may have been “established, financed, maintained, or controlled” by a legislative branch official.

The bill would require that lobbyists disclose all prior work in the executive or legislative branches, and would extend to two years the prohibition on elected officials leaving the legislative branch and lobbying Congress. Senior legislative staff members would also be prohibited from lobbying Congress for one year.

The full Senate is expected to take up the legislation next week.

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